

Youth Safety Policy

Quakers believe the Divine exists in every person. We are committed to honoring that of God in everyone and to providing an environment in which every member, attender, and visitor --whether a child or an adult - can be free from harm, fear, or dishonor. We respect each other through our actions, and in that spirit, we adopt this policy.

This policy has been created to provide direction to the Meeting in the selection, hiring, and training of employees and volunteers who are responsible for the supervision, guidance, and teaching of our children, as well as a committee structure to deal with concerns about their safety.

Adelphi Friends Meeting cherishes the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. They are a vital part of our faith community. We seek a community where no child (or adult) is at risk for emotional, physical or sexual abuse. We seek a community where a mutual sense of trust allows children and adults to speak out when they feel uncomfortable or unsafe, where difficult issues can be discussed, and where our loving concern for one another is strengthened, not diminished, by these discussions.

AFM seeks to prevent the occurrence of child abuse within its programs. Prevention occurs in various ways that include: carefully screening applicants, checking references, conducting criminal background checks, and regularly re-checking criminal records. It also includes training on the signs and symptoms of possible child abuse, regular monitoring of staff during youth activities, ensuring this Policy is disseminated to all who work with youth, training on this Youth Safety Policy, and creating procedures appropriate for each youth program, and monitoring compliance with those procedures.

We have reviewed and approved the practices outlined in this document. By implementing these practices, our goal is to protect the children and youth of Adelphi Friends Meeting from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour.

The practices set forth in this document are not designed to replace good judgment and common sense. No policy can anticipate all situations. As a general principle, when in doubt, this policy should be implemented by minimizing the risk of abuse. Protecting and honoring children and youth is not a static event; it is a process that evolves with changing governmental regulations and the circumstances of each interaction. This working document will be evaluated and updated when necessary and reviewed regularly every four years by the Youth Safety Committee, which consists of the Clerk of the Meeting, and the Clerk of Trustees Committee, Clerk of Pastoral Care Committee, and Clerk of Religious Education Committee or their designees. The Youth Safety Committee will determine a date in the near term for this policy to take effect.

I. Definitions & Acronyms

For purposes of this document, the following definitions apply:

Adult refers to someone 18 years or older.

AFM refers to Adelphi Friends Meeting.

Child, children, minors, and youth are defined as including anyone under the age of eighteen (18).

Parent includes a guardian or other adult entrusted by the parent or guardian with custody of a child.

RE refers to the AFM Religious Education Committee.

Youth worker refers to anyone, adult or teen, who works with children on a regular basis, whether paid or unpaid, including:

- Those who provide child-care and First Day School during worship, committee meetings, Meeting for Business, second hours, and special events.
- Those who lead and assist First Day School and Young Friends group programs and events.
- Those who have overnight responsibility during events sponsored by Adelphi Friends Meeting.

II. Selection of Youth Workers

The Youth Safety Committee manages the application and screening process for selecting youth workers. This process does not apply to guest speakers, one-time or infrequent volunteers, and parents staying in a class with their own child.

The screening process includes the following:

a) Six-Month Rule (Volunteers)

A person may be considered to serve as a youth worker only after having been involved with Adelphi Friends Meeting for a minimum of six (6) months. If an applicant's involvement with Adelphi Friends Meeting has been for less than 6 months, a positive recommendation from the applicant's prior meeting community(ies) may suffice, depending on the Youth Safety Committee's judgment.

b) Application

Every prospective youth worker must complete an application that includes the names and contact information for at least two references, who are not related to the applicant.

c) Personal Interview

Every prospective youth worker will have a personal interview with at least 2 members of the Youth Safety Committee to determine their suitability, and to clarify expectations for the work involved.

The interview provides an opportunity for the applicant:

- to discuss their interest and suitability for this service;
- to discuss this Youth Safety Policy
- to receive a copy of this document and sign a form acknowledging receipt and review of the policy;

- to learn about next steps in the selection process, including the background check and reference check;
- to discuss critical information that may result from the criminal background check, including the applicants' transparency concerning contacts with the criminal justice system whether they are disqualifying or not.

d) Criminal Background Check

A criminal-background check is required for all prospective (and current) youth workers. This check is coordinated by the Youth Safety Committee through a professional background check service that is selected by the Committee and paid for by the Meeting. According to the screening criteria used by that service, an applicant will not be approved as a youth worker if the background check shows: Conviction of, imposition of a deferred sentence for, or any plea of guilty or no contest at any time, or the existence of any pending charges, for (i) any crime involving sexual misconduct, (ii) any crimes of abuse against children, (iii) any crimes involving firearms, and (iv) any offence involving distribution or intent to distribute illegal drugs or substances, (v) felonious assaults or batteries. A person may not serve as a youth worker unless they have had a background check within three years of the date of service.

e) Reference Check

After interviewing the applicant, the Youth Safety Committee must contact at least two of the applicant's references. Reference checks can be conducted by phone, video conference, in person, or by email. The purpose of the reference check is to determine whether the applicant has the character and interpersonal skills that justify entrusting the applicant with the supervision of children. If the applicant has worked with minors within the past five years, the reference interviews should include someone from that organization or the family where the applicant worked with minors, if possible. The Youth Safety Committee must maintain notes from reference calls, including contact information, in a password protected file.

f) Teenage Assistants (under 18 years old)

Teenage assistants must be at least 15 years old. They must be screened as specified above, except that criminal background checks are not required. Teenage assistants who assist teachers in First Day School classes or otherwise supervise children must be under the supervision of a youth worker 18 years or older.

g) Confidentiality

Personal information gained during the screening process about any individual must be held in confidence by the Youth Safety Committee and disseminated outside the Committee only to serve the purposes of the youth safety policy. Confirmation of background check approval for each youth worker is saved in a password protected file kept by the Youth Safety Committee.

III. Other Safety Measures

a) Discipline Policy

AFM strives to create a safe and nurturing environment where youth of all ages can experience the community of Friends. Our entire community, First Day School, and Aftercare seek to use conflict resolution familiar to Friends when the need arises. Physical discipline such as spanking, grabbing, or hitting children is unacceptable under any circumstance. Youth workers should consult with the clerk of

Religious Education or the Youth Safety Committee if they seek additional guidance in maintaining a peaceful class or childcare.

b) Two Youth Workers

At least two youth workers must be in attendance when a child or children are being supervised during AFM activities. If only one youth worker is present with a supervised child or children, the youth worker must either:

- recruit another youth worker in the building to be a second youth worker; or
- join another group with the child or children.

Persons who are not subject to screening (infrequent volunteer, for example) do not qualify as a youth worker. The two-youth-worker rule does not apply in respect of a child who is in the presence of their parent, though that parent does not qualify as a youth worker for other children.

A teenage assistant who is under the supervision of an adult youth worker qualifies as a second youth worker.

Temporary absence of a second youth worker in accordance with the bathroom procedures under this policy, or other absence of a youth worker for a short period where needed, does not violate the two- youth-worker requirement.

c) Unlocked Doors

Doors to classrooms and child care rooms must never be locked while supervised children are inside the room.

d) Contact with Youth Outside of Meeting Programs

A youth worker must not establish private communication (by phone, text, email, Instagram or other technologies) with a youth outside the youth program, except for communications with the knowledge and consent of the child's parent, or communications to a whole group or class.

e) Parental Responsibility

Parents are responsible for their children during times when children are on AFM premises but have not been placed under the supervision of a youth worker. Unsupervised children may occupy common spaces where they are visible, such as the foyer, but may not be in a room where a door can be closed and they cannot be seen, such as a classroom, or the White House attic or basement. Parents are responsible for making sure their children comply with this rule.

f) No Sexual Activity

Any sexual activity between any Youth Worker (including Minor Youth Workers) and a youth participant of an AFM program in which the Youth Worker is involved, is contrary to AFM policy.

g) Check-in/Check-out

The relevant committee in charge of supervision of children must establish procedures by which a parent places their child under the supervision of a youth worker. This may involve a written check in/check out or a more informal oral process. These procedures, including the times that children may be placed under the supervision of a youth worker and released from that supervision, must be made available on the AFM website and kept up to date so that parents are aware of the applicable rules.

h) Restroom Procedures

The goal of these procedures is to: facilitate restroom visits, maintain healthy relationships, encourage appropriate boundary management, protect children and youth from possible harm, and help youth workers avoid accusations of wrongdoing.

Procedures for Child Care Program (children ages 0-5)

For children in diapers, the youth worker must make sure to get their parent's permission, with relevant instructions and materials, before changing diapers. For children who don't need diapers, a youth worker must accompany the child to the restroom. The youth worker must allow the child to use the restroom as independently and privately as possible and provide assistance as needed. The youth worker must never touch a child in private areas. The youth worker and child must return to class after finishing the bathroom visit.

Procedures for First Day School Children Ages 5-6

The youth worker supervising the child will allow the child to leave the classroom to go to the bathroom and will observe the child to make certain the child arrives at the restroom alone. If the youth worker cannot see from the classroom whether the child arrived at the bathroom alone, the youth worker must accompany the child to the restroom, after informing the other youth worker. If the child needs assistance, the youth worker will provide whatever help is needed and take care never to touch a child in private areas. If there is an accident that soils or wets a child's clothing, the youth worker should get help from the child's parent, unless the parent has previously outlined and given permission to address this in advance.

Procedures for First Day School Children and Youth Ages 7-18

Children and youth from seven to eighteen years old may use the restroom on their own, without supervision or accompaniment. However, one of the youth workers in charge should monitor restroom departures with sufficient attention to recognize when an unusual amount of time has passed. In those cases, a youth worker should search for the child or youth to determine whether the child or youth needs help or redirection back to class.

Special Needs

If a child or youth has a disability or a special need, the restroom protocol may need adaptation (for example, by applying the protocol for a different age group) in accord with instructions from the parent. If there is an accident that soils or wets a child's clothing, the supervising adult should get help from the child's parent unless this concern has already been addressed with the parent.

Managing Expectations and Communications

Parents should receive these procedures, with a request to provide any special information about their child that may be needed to help youth workers provide appropriate assistance or supervision for using the restroom. Parents should provide children with clothing they can manage independently, if possible.

i) Field trips or day trips

Field trips or day trips sponsored by the Religious Education Committee or another committee of the Meeting require supervision by youth workers with a ratio of at least one adult to six children. One youth worker should never be alone with one child. Any youth worker driving youth on an AFM event must show

current driver's license and car insurance

j) Youth Safety Committee

The Youth Safety Committee acts on behalf of the Meeting to address concerns about the safety and well-being of children participating in AFM programs or otherwise on AFM premises. Any concerns for youth safety that arise from background checks of prospective employees and volunteers, from information about adult employees or volunteers provided at any time by other sources, or by any suspected incident of abuse, must be referred to the Youth Safety Committee. The Youth Safety Committee must also consider concerns about the implementation of the Youth Safety Policy that are brought to its attention and that cannot be immediately resolved by the appropriate Committee of AFM. The Youth Safety Committee determines who serves as its clerk. Its members serve ex officio (i.e. they do not go through the nominating committee process). The clerks of Trustees, Pastoral Care, and RE may designate a member of their committee to serve on the Youth Safety Committee in their stead. At any time where a designee of a committee clerk resigns, the relevant committee clerk serves on the Youth Safety Committee until that clerk appoints a successor.

k) Oversight and Implementation

The Meeting must review this policy, as well as associated practices and implementation, every four years. That review must be carried out by the Youth Safety Committee. A calendar and procedure will be developed for this review, which includes the following:

- Make recommendations to the Clerk of Religious Education for improving child protection in First Day School or the childcare program.
- Compare the written Youth Safety Policy document with current practice to affirm strengths and identify areas of practice that are not consistent with that policy.
- Develop ideas for making the Youth Safety Policy more practical and effective, both for safeguarding children and for optimizing resources (especially time and labor) to avoid placing needless burdens on First Day School or others in the Meeting community.
- Review the confidential personnel records of background checks and reference calls to confirm that these practices are well-implemented, and to provide appreciation, support, and guidance to those involved with those due diligence tasks.
- Report to Business Meeting about the results of the review process to reassure and inform the Meeting community, while also documenting the completion of that review process in the Business Meeting minutes.
- The report to the Business Meeting should take place no later than every four years from the month of the previous report.

After the review is completed, the Youth Safety Committee will report any resulting recommendations to Meeting for Business and make requests for improving RE and aftercare procedures to strengthen child protection in accord with these best practices.

l) Reporting Incidents or concerns to the Youth Safety Committee

Appendix I details procedures for reporting concerns about possible child abuse and other concerns about child safety. Safety concerns may arise that are not allegations of child abuse and which do not call for the response described in Section III of Appendix I. Any person (parent, employee, volunteer, child or other person) with a concern regarding safety of a child or children in the Meeting is encouraged to take the concern to a member of the Youth Safety Committee.

Any Meeting member or other person who becomes aware of, or suspicious that, an incident of child abuse has occurred must immediately notify a member of the Youth Safety Committee. The Youth Safety Committee must create and maintain records of reports received and actions taken on those reports. The person must report incidents of abuse to Maryland Department of Human Services at 1-800-332-6347, as required by law (see Appendix #1).

m) **This Policy to be publicized.**

This policy must be publicly posted on AFM's website.

n) **Prevention Awareness.**

The Youth Safety Committee must facilitate at least one session annually on youth safety and the prevention, recognition and reporting of child abuse. All child-care and youth workers must attend this session, or if unable to attend, must listen to or watch a recording of this session. Additionally, we encourage all adults in our Meeting to attend such sessions.

Appendix 1

Responding to Suspected Child Abuse or Youth Safety Concerns

I. Definitions of Child Abuse According to Maryland Law

AFM operates in Maryland and we are therefore governed by Maryland law. The specific Child Abuse Laws pertinent to Maryland are contained in the Maryland Code, Family Law, and some excerpts are in Appendix II. The law requires everyone to report child abuse or neglect. In accordance with these laws, child abuse, neglect or sexual abuse generally include, but are not limited to the following:

- Any treatment, action or behavior or lack thereof to a child by any adult or other child that is not accidental, and that causes physical, sexual or emotional harm or injury to that child. This includes actions or behaviors that are direct as well as indirect through writing, phone calls, texting, instant messaging, via any form of social media or other form of communication or interaction.
- Any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member. These acts include incest, rape, sodomy, and sexual offense. This includes actions or behaviors that are direct as well as indirect through writing, phone calls, texting, instant messaging, via any form of social media or any other form of communication or interaction.
- Any action or failure to act that deprives a child of essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, or medical care, by a caregiver who bears responsibility for providing such.

II. Responding to Incidents or Concerns

If any individual

- a. suspects abuse or neglect of a child participating in any AFM program or on AFM premises.; or
- b. has observed behavior causing concern for the wellbeing of a child in an AFM program, whether on the premises or elsewhere, or affecting a youth worker in an AFM program; or
- c. becomes aware of information concerning suspected abuse in connection with a child or youth worker in an AFM program, whether the abuse occurred in the youth program or elsewhere, (unless the information is privileged and cannot be revealed)

the individual must immediately notify a member of the Youth Safety Committee.

Any sexual activity between any youth worker (including a teenage assistant) and a youth participant of an AFM program in which the youth worker is involved, is contrary to AFM policy and should be brought to the attention of the Youth Safety Committee

Bringing a matter to the attention of the Youth Safety Committee is independent of an individual's responsibility to report under Maryland law.

III. Steps in Handling Suspected or Actual Abuse

1. In the event of suspected child abuse or neglect, the following procedure shall be followed in accordance with Maryland Family Law section 5-704:
 - i. The individual shall make an oral report of the suspicion or incident to the local Department of Social Services or Police, with guidance from the Youth Safety Committee if there is a question concerning whether this is a reportable event, AND
 - ii. Report the suspicion or incident to a member of the Youth Safety Committee, if appropriate.
 - iii. If so required by Maryland law or otherwise considered appropriate, the individual or the Youth Safety Committee must follow up by making a written report to the civil authority within 48 hours of the oral report.
2. If applicable, the employee or volunteer alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children and will not be permitted to participate in any activities involving children or youth, pending an investigation
3. The parent of the youth will be notified by the Youth Safety Committee as soon as possible, excepting circumstances in which such parent is the alleged abuser.
4. In situations where the parent is available and not the alleged abuser, the Youth Safety Committee will assist as requested by the parent to care for the needs of the child. If the parent is not immediately available or is the alleged abuser, the Youth Safety Committee will ensure that the child, the alleged victim, receives immediate medical attention, if and as appropriate.
5. Investigation of the suspicion or incident is the responsibility of the civil authorities who are trained for this purpose. Members of the Youth Safety Committee and all others involved are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation. In the course of any investigation, all involved are reminded that confidentiality is important to the alleged victim as well as the alleged perpetrator. Any person ultimately found guilty of abuse by the authorities will be permanently removed from their position with children or youth and will not be permitted to participate in any activities involving children and youth in AFM.
6. The Clerk of AFM will ensure that all required reports to the civil authorities are made and that internal written records are kept regarding the suspicion or incident. The internal records should include, in detail, all steps taken by AFM in compliance with this policy and state law, as well as all actions to foster the healing of everyone involved. These will be kept in a locked file or secure digital location.
7. AFM's insurance carrier will be notified by Trustees, if relevant.

8. After consultation with AFM legal counsel if needed, the Clerk and Trustees will determine whether, to what extent and by whom internal announcements or reports will be made within AFM to Friends.
9. The Youth Safety Committee, together with Trustees, and AFM's legal counsel if applicable will together determine what information might need to be communicated to help the community recover. This group will make decisions about communicating information and facilitating healing and will assist in carrying these out.
10. The Youth Safety Committee will contact the parent and the victim to inform them of steps that were taken in order to keep the parents informed.
11. At the conclusion of the investigation, if it is determined by the civil authorities that they do not have enough information to move forward, or if the suspicion is unsubstantiated, the Youth Safety Committee will determine whether any further internal steps need to be taken.
12. Throughout the process, the confidentiality of both the youth and the accused is very important, as is the healing of the community. All are asked to keep this in mind as decisions are made and related actions occur.

IV. Concerning Behaviors

We recognize that some situations, actions or behaviors of youth workers that are not reportable as suspicion of child abuse may still concern AFM as behavior inconsistent with AFM values. Whenever there is a doubt as to whether a situation should be reported, the Youth Safety Committee must contact the civil authorities to allow them to make the determination. If the behavior is not reportable the following steps should be taken:

13. The disconcerting behavior will be brought to the attention of a member of the Youth Safety Committee by the individual(s) observing or receiving a report about the behavior. The Youth Safety Committee will work with all the individuals involved to attempt to bring clarity to the situation.
14. If the behavior is concerning but not reportable in nature, the Youth Safety Committee will note the concern in writing and notify any affected persons as soon as possible.
15. If the behavior is deemed serious by the Youth Safety Committee the individual in question will be notified in writing that he/she is being put on inactive status and cannot participate in any AFM youth activity until the matter is cleared up. At this point, an inquiry will be initiated by the Youth Safety Committee to determine the following:

The complaint has a basis for further investigation. If so, conduct an internal inquiry and,

- i. If deemed reportable, take reporting steps as indicated previously.
- ii. If non-reportable but the behavior indicates
 - a. a lack of good judgment, or

- b. an insufficient level of maturity for the position of youth worker, or
- c. an inappropriate sense of boundaries, then the Youth Safety Committee shall determine a course of action appropriate to the circumstances.

Actions may include the following:

- iii. provide additional training,
- iv. provide closer supervision,
- v. offer a clearness committee,
- vi. temporarily restrict participation in Youth Programs pending additional maturity, and/or
- vii. bar permanently from youth work.

If the internal inquiry indicates that the individual should be barred from the youth program, the Pastoral Care Committee will be informed so that they can attend to the spiritual and emotional needs of the individual.

Information about the situation will be shared only on an as-needed basis, and only to the limited extent necessary. Any written documents will be kept locked in a confidential file.

Appendix 2 Child Abuse Laws in Maryland

Maryland

Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

Physical Abuse - Citation: Fam. Law § 5-701

'Abuse' means:

- The physical or mental injury of a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care, custody, or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed
- Sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not

Neglect - Citation: Fam. Law § 5-701

'Neglect' means leaving a child unattended or other failure to give proper care and attention to a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child under circumstances that indicate:

- That the child's health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm
- Mental injury to the child or a substantial risk of mental injury

Sexual Abuse/Exploitation - Citation: Fam. Law § 5-701

'Sexual abuse' means any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care, custody, or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member. 'Sexual abuse' includes incest, rape, sexual offense in any degree, sodomy, and unnatural or perverted sexual practices.

Emotional Abuse - Citation: Fam. Law § 5-701

'Mental injury' means the observable, identifiable, and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function.

Standards for Reporting - Citation: Fam. Law § 5-704

A report is required when a person has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Individual Responsibility - Citation: Fam. Law § 5-704

A mandated reporter shall make an oral report, by telephone or direct communication, as soon as possible:

- To the local Department of Social Services or appropriate law enforcement agency if the person has reason to believe that the child has been subjected to abuse
- To the local department if the person has reason to believe that the child has been subjected to neglect

The mandated reporter shall make a written report to the local department no later than 48 hours after the contact, examination, attention, or treatment that caused the individual to believe that the child had been subjected to abuse or neglect and shall submit a copy to the local State's attorney if the individual has reason to believe that the child has been subjected to abuse.

Content of Reports - Citation: Fam. Law § 5-704

Insofar as is reasonably possible, an individual who makes a report under this section shall include in the report the following information:

- The name, age, and home address of the child
- The name and home address of the child's parent(s) or other person responsible for the child's care
- The whereabouts of the child
- The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect of the child, including any evidence or information available to the reporter concerning possible previous instances of abuse or neglect
- Any other information that might be helpful to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect and the identity of any individual responsible for the abuse or neglect

MD Code, Family Law, § 5-705

§ 5-705. Reports of suspected abuse or neglect; other persons

Persons required to notify authorities and report suspected instances of abuse or neglect; exceptions

(a)(1) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection, notwithstanding any other provision of law, including a law on privileged communications, a person in this State other than a health practitioner, police officer, or educator or human service worker who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect shall notify the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency.

(1) A person is not required to provide notice under paragraph (1) of this subsection:

(i) in violation of the privilege described under § 9-108 of the Courts Article;

(ii) if the notice would disclose matter communicated in confidence by a client to the client's attorney or other information relating to the representation of the client; or

(iii) in violation of any constitutional right to assistance of counsel.

(2) A minister of the gospel, clergyman, or priest of an established church of any denomination is not required to provide notice under paragraph (1) of this subsection if the notice would disclose matter in relation to any communication described in § 9-111 of the Courts Article and:

(i) the communication was made to the minister, clergyman, or priest in a professional character in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which the minister, clergyman, or priest belongs; and

(ii) the minister, clergyman, or priest is bound to maintain the confidentiality of that communication under canon law, church doctrine, or practice.

Agency to notify the other agency

(b)(1) An agency to which a report of suspected abuse or neglect is made under subsection (a) of this section shall immediately notify the other agency.

(2) This subsection does not prohibit a local department and an appropriate law enforcement agency from agreeing to cooperative arrangements.

Oral or written report

(c) A report made under subsection (a) of this section may be oral or in writing.

Contents of report

(d)(1) To the extent possible, a report made under subsection (a) of this section shall include the information required by § 5-704(c) of this subtitle.

(2) A report made under subsection (a) of this section shall be regarded as a report within the provisions of this subtitle, whether or not the report contains all of the information required by § 5-704(c) of this subtitle.